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Letters to the Editor

Hazards of Domestic Role for CIA

Your editorial "Suppression at the CIA" (Nov. 5) urges the President to approve a twice-rejected draft Executive Order governing intelligence activities. I take issue with that position. That draft and previous efforts at replacing the present Executive Order signed by President Carter on Jan. 24, 1978, would empower the CIA to conduct in this country intelligence activities from which it has been restricted by long-standing tradition and public policy.

In particular, the draft in question would permit infiltration of domestic groups by the CIA for intelligence purposes; clandestine collection of information by the CIA about U.S. persons in the United States, and the conduct of covert action operations in the United States.

Such new authorities concern many among those who regularly oversee intelli-

gence activities. They, and I, believe that the agency is best served if it cannot be asked to conduct intelligence activities which raise the specter of domestic intelligence gathering. Further, there is also a belief that changes in CIA authorities made by the draft order could lead to less cooperation with the FBI on intelligence matters in this country.

The drafting of a new Executive Order on intelligence activities ought to start from the same premise as did those of President Ford and President Carter—preserving the essential operating dichotomy of the CIA overseas, the FBI in the United States, and, where their operations overlap or conflict, insisting upon coordination and cooperation. That formula served as a benchmark in this country of many years. It was reaffirmed by the Church and Pike Committees. Today's congressional intelligence committees are reasserting it. Being positive about the mission of the intelligence community doesn't require a departure from this principle.

EDWARD P. BOLAND (D., MASS.)
Chairman
House Committee on Intelligence
Washington